Expert Committee to Review Education Policy

3419. PROF. M.M.AGARWAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to constitute an Expert Committee to review the present education policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof, if not, the reason therefor; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) to (c) No, Sir. The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, as modified in 1992, evolved on a national consensus, has laid down a comprehensive framework that guides the development of education in its entirety. It continues to be relevant and has stood the test of time. It does not require any revision/modification at present.

Mal-nourished Children

3420. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that even after 55 years of Independence, half of our children remain out of school and are mal-nourished;

(b) whether it is also a fact that even those who have received elementary education, are unable to read and write properly.

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps being taken to check such a situation in the right earnest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) As per the National Family Health Survey-II 1998-99, 79% of the children in the 6—14 age group are attending schools, and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme is in operation to ensure that the nutritional needs of children in primary schools are addressed.

(b) to (d) The curricular objectives of elementary education focus on the development of competencies, including those relating to reading and writing skills. Government has continuously strived to improve the quality of education and a number of steps have been taken towards this end. These measures include improving the physical infrastructure of schools, provision of teaching-learning equipments, appointment of additional teachers, regular teacher training,

a child friendly pedagogy, a contextually relevant curriculum and improved textbooks and greater involvement of parents and local communities in the functioning of schools.

Funds for Children's Development

3421. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether, out of every Rs. 100/- spent by the Centre in the "90s, only 60 paise had gone to children's education, 40 paise on their development and 20 paise on their health, whereas the proposed figures for 2000-2003 are Rs. 1/-, 45 paise and 34 paise, respectively;

(b) whether the budget expenditure on children rose marginally from 0.6 per cent of the total spending in 1990-91 to 1.6 per cent in 1998-99;

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(d) what constructive steps are being taken by Government to allocate more funds for the development of children?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House shortly.

Representation of NE India in NCERT books

3422. DR ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleasee to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the resources and contribution of North-Eastern India is not adequately and appropriately focused in the NCERT courses, including history, cultural heritage, freedom movement, etc;

(b) if so, the action taken to correct this anomaly; and

(c) if not, the details of chapters in various courses wherein it is actually presented.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) and (b) As reported by the NCERT, resources and contributions of North East India have not in the past, been adequately and appropriately focused in the NCERT courses. In the National Curriculum Framework for Schools Education- 2000, this has been clearly mentioned and a recommendation has been made that the North East